

BREAD LOAF SCHOOL OF ENGLISH

PRELIMINARY ANNOUNCEMENTS

1957

All matters relative to your room and board, mail, and any charges you may incur (apart from the regular bill for tuition, board and room) should be referred to Mr. Donovan, Resident Manager, at the INN DESK.

For details regarding the management of the School, please make inquiry at the DIRECTOR'S OFFICE. All matters pertaining to your initial registration and payment of bills, information about courses, lectures, and graduate credit should be referred to the SECRETARY'S OFFICE. Director R. L. Cook and Miss Lillian Becker, Secretary, are the staff to whom you should bring your request for information about details of the School.

REGISTRATION PROCEDURE

Students should obtain confirmation of their courses from the Secretary's Office as soon after arrival at Bread Loaf as possible. Students who have not completed registration of courses in advance must personally consult with the Director. Appointments may be made with Miss Becker.

Registration is not completed until a registration card and a "notify in case of accident" card have been returned to the Secretary's Office. Please be sure to fill in the registration card on both sides.

A representative of the College Treasurer's Office will be in the Blue Parlor on Wednesday, June 26. It is requested that all bills which have not been paid be attended to at this time. Receipts for bills paid in advance may be obtained from the Treasurer at this time.

Please keep in mind the fact that if you wish to change your status from that of a non-credit student to that of a credit student or vice versa in any course, this change must be made on or before June 28. All changes in courses must be made with the approval of the Director. For a change from one course to another, after June 28, a charge of one dollar will be made. All persons desiring to visit classes in which they are not enrolled must also obtain permission from the Director.

MAIL SCHEDULE

Outgoing mail must be posted not later than 9:00 A.M. and 2:00 P.M. Mail will be ready for distribution at the following hours: 10:30 A.M. and 3:30 P.M.

MEAL HOURS

In a day or two the regular seating plan will go into effect. There will be one seating. Please consult the chart on the dining room door to ascertain your table assignments.

<u>Daily</u>		<u>Sunday</u>	
Breakfast	7:30-8:00 A. M.	Breakfast	8:00-8:30 A. M.
Luncheon	12:45-1:00 P. M.	Dinner	1:00-1:30 P. M.
Dinner	6:00-6:15 P. M.	Supper	6:00-6:30 P. M.

Since most of the waiters and waitresses are students, it is urgently requested that all students come to meals promptly, especially to breakfast, so that those who are waiting on table may be able to reach their classes on time. In the morning the door will be closed at 8:00. No students may be served breakfast after that time. Please do not ask the head waiter to make exceptions to this regulation. He has no authority to do so.

SUPPLIES

Stationery, notebook paper, pencils, ink, etc., may be purchased at the Bookstore, post cards at the Front Desk, and cigarettes at the Snack Bar. It is impossible for credit to be extended, so please do not ask for it.

BOOKSTORE

It is urgently requested that students purchase their texts immediately because it is frequently necessary for us to order additional copies. It is impossible to allow students to maintain charge accounts at the Bookstore, and we hope that students will cooperate by not asking for any favors of this kind. The hours when the Bookstore will be open will be announced soon.

BREAD LOAF PARKING REGULATIONS

A preliminary notice concerning parking has been made in the bulletin. Stringently enforced state laws prohibit the parking of cars on the side of the highway, and it is requested that students and guests endeavor to keep the roads clear in front of the Inn. Students living in Maple may park their cars in the space behind the cottage; students at Tamarack on the lawn under the trees by the main road. All others should use the parking space near the Barn.

PRELIMINARY ANNOUNCEMENTS

In the Little Theatre at 8:15 Wednesday evening, President Stratton, Dr. Freeman, director of the Summer Schools, and Mr. Cook will speak briefly. An informal reception will be held in the Recreation Hall in the Barn directly after the preliminary meeting in the Little Theatre.

OPEN SEASON AND THE COMMODITY

Opening Address BLES

June 26, 1957

R.L.Cook

1.

When one of my students at Middlebury College recently inquired of a teller in a local bank, "How are you today?" he received a typically north-of-Boston reply. "My habits," said the teller, "are bothering me." So are mine, and one especially at this particular season of the year. It is the habitual need to re-examine and clarify a question that must also be hovering in your minds. That question is: How should a student approach a graduate school of English like Bread Loaf? Habitually, at the opening of the school, it is important to interject a comment, a suggestion, a clue, and perhaps, if lucky, a challenge to your purposes. For this is the open season when teachers who have made careful plans attend summer workshops, institutes, or conferences in search of a commodity called education.

Why do these teachers, who have already submitted to a stiff educational regimen for nine months, assume a hardly less arduous burden in advanced classes for six-or-eight weeks in the summer? Some want to complete necessary requirements for regular state licenses; some want to earn a higher degree; some want to improve professionally. Neither group is mutually exclusive, and each has a chance at a summer session to take advantage of educational changes and advances, so that when in the fall they return to their school systems they are better prepared to teach more effectively. They have exchanged ideas, discussed methods, and traded information with other teachers, and usually they have been stimulated to new purposes by simply being able to deliberate on literature for a few uninterrupted

weeks under optimum conditions. They react like the elementary school teacher--a man--from a Maryland county--who said, "It's good to get your vocabulary out of the fourth or fifth grade level for a time. After teaching all year, I get a great deal of professional stimulation from discussions in class and from talking with other teachers from all parts of the United States and other countries." I would not minimize any of the three chief factors; neither the economic--the anticipated salary boost for further study--which is influenced by the fact that ninety-eight percent of the salary schedules in urban systems are based on the teachers' educational attainment, nor the social factor which results from recreation and change of scene, or the intellectual factor which comes from being able to devote one's whole time to study in one's chosen field.

But what should you be looking for in this particular school? I can best answer this question by developing a certain situation and by trying to resolve the issue involved in the situation. All of us who are teachers know how carefully we have to budget our hard won savings on a rising price index. We are forced to be sales-resistant like Thoreau's lawyer-neighbor. A strolling Indian peddling baskets stopped and asked him: "Do you wish to buy any baskets?" The lawyer replied: "No, we do not want any." The Indian, affronted by the lawyer's refusal to buy a basket exclaimed: "What? Do you mean to starve us?" Now if the story ended here the implication might be that those who are economically better off than others ought to show a little charitableness toward their industrious fellowman. Buy the basket, some would say, whether or not you need it. But Thoreau shifts the emphasis in the other direction--and I think he has a considerable point--by suggesting that if we make something to sell we must have a commodity worth another person's cash or interest. "Or," as Thoreau shrewdly adds, "at least make him think that it (is) so."

Apparently, the citizens of this country believe education as a commodity is

important. There is, however, some question about the degree in intensity of their conviction. We who hold positions in the fields of public and private education are not satisfied with lip-service to pietistic clichés. As in Robert Frost's "Choose Something Like a Star", it doesn't suffice that the star says, "I burn." We want to know "With what degree of heat"; in effect, with what degree of intensity. Is it with a degree of intensity that Americans want to provide fine new schools and especially, the best teaching procurable? Yes, my habits are bothering me, habits that are conditioned by my being a tax-paying citizen, a teacher, and one interested in directing a graduate school. All of us have literally a split-level interest in this problem of education in a democracy; that is to say, a private one and a public one. As teachers we are both buyers and sellers of baskets or their equivalent. As teachers we make our own kind of baskets to sell. We call them lectures. When we go to graduate school for further study, we are purchasers of a commodity in the open market. A summer session is an open season for another kind of commodity. What this commodity is and how it differs from place to place is an important inquiry to pursue briefly.

2.

Take Bread Loaf, for example, what distinguishes our commodity? Thirty-eight years ago the English School at Bread Loaf took form one late summer day when a group of educational leaders from Middlebury College stretched themselves on a sunny slope of the Widow's Clearing and spent an afternoon hour discussing "the novel proposal that the Bread Loaf property be turned into an educational asset." Promptly the wheels turned and the English School which had been located on the

college campus at Middlebury, removed to Bread Loaf and assumed squatter sovereignty in Joseph Battell's mountain bowl. Here, fostered by foreseeing educators, nourished by effective teaching, and strengthened by devoted students, it has, in spite of occasional difficulties, thrived for thirty-seven years, and made itself subtly felt in American education. Upon removing from Middlebury to the mountain, the first announcement was terse. "This School," it read, "is organized for teachers and students of the English language and literature, and offers instruction in the following divisions of their work: technique of teaching, composition, literary criticism, and expression." The dean proceeded to implement these four divisions, starting from scratch. As Dr. Collins, one of the leaders responsible for Bread Loaf, remarked: "No tradition hampered the enterprise; the traditions began with the first session." It can honestly be contended that we have been contributing to strengthen a vigorous tradition in American education ever since. But in what way?

The answer to this question is found in the original idea which remains the basis of education at the School. The idea was stated by Wilfred E. Davison, dean at Bread Loaf from 1921 until his death in 1929. "We believe in creative work," he said in an address delivered in 1928, "because we believe that only so can the great literature of the past and the present truly come alive--that is our aim. An eager, developing, creative attitude of mind that shall precipitate in expression of others--that, so far as it can be phrased in a word, is the Bread Loaf idea." The key word here is creative and, in the sense in which it is used, it means an imaginative approach. To write poems and stories should first be encouraged, but one need not write poems or stories to show creative imagination. There is a kind of imagination that re-creates stories and poems, and the "new criticism" of the last decade at least made us more aware of this fact than we had been before. Dean Davison was thinking of the creative imagination as functioning in both ways, I am sure; func-

tioning, that is to say, both in imaginative writing and in imaginative reaction to the thoughts and feelings of other writers.

This, then, is the original Bread Loaf idea in education at the graduate school level. In 1944, on the occasion of the 25th anniversary of the founding of Bread Loaf, Professor Harry G. Owen, then director of Bread Loaf School of English, now dean of the faculty at Rutgers University, reminded us that "too often the graduate study of literature has emphasized a knowledge of minute technicalities of literary dogma rather than a sympathy with the living spirit of literature." I am inclined to think this is true. I think it is one of the liabilities in any close textual study, and at Bread Loaf we have supported pretty staunchly "a sympathy with the living spirit of literature." And Professor Owen also said: "To us, creation seems as important as dissection." Yes, of course, but perhaps creation is more important than dissection, although in a happy conjunction of things the critical examination which follows the creative process serves to strengthen the writer and enlighten the student reader. Any atrophy of the critical habit represents a limitation in either the individual or the civilization which produces him. But first things stay first only by keeping them first, and the creative approach and the imaginative effort which it implies, is the first way to go at things up here on the mountain. This is a way to take the intellectual commodity in the Bread Loaf curriculum.

The tradition of imagination and creativity is the one we would foster in education. There seems to be too little of it. Our way of taking the educational tradition should be like the performance of the Navajo weavers out in Arizona and New Mexico, who, when they got some of the saddle blankets of Coronado's ill-fated conquistadors, took their fabric apart and on handlooms stretched from cottonwood trees spun these threads into characteristic designs. These are among the most

highly prized blankets in the Southwestern Indian trade. Like the Navajo weavers, we are re-creators, and it is pretty important that, like them, we take the fine fabrics from the past--the great past of our Judaic-Hellenic-Roman-Gallic-Germanic-Brito-American traditions--and impose our own designs upon them. If we are not creative writers, we can try to be creative teachers. There is no good reason why, like Walter de la Mare's poor Jim Jay, we should either get stuck in yesterday--"Do diddle di do/ Poor Jim Jay/ Got stuck fast/ In yesterday." Nor is there any good reason why, like the old men in Witter Bynner's dourly ironic colloquy, we should become sacrificial victims of the younger generation.

Said the old men to the young men,
 "Who will take arms to be free?"
 Said the young men to the old men,
 "We."

Said the old men to the young men,
 "It is finished. You may go."
 Said the young men to the old men,
 "No."

Said the old men to the young men,
 "What is there left to do?"
 Said the young men to the old men,
 "You."

Although Bread Loaf has followed the tradition emphasizing the creative and the imaginative approach to literature, established at the beginning of the school, it is not to be expected that there have been no alterations or modifications in other aspects of the educational program. The four original divisions of teaching, composition, literary criticism, and expression have been re-grouped. We have constantly made innovations in the curriculum, freshening and revitalizing it, to satisfy the changing needs of our time. At each new session we have brought to Bread Loaf teachers of the first rank to make our program effective. (I might say, parenthetically, that all our plans grow out of the faculty. It is my con-

viction that given the right teachers, "the rest follows," as Whitman would say.) By offering excellence in teaching we have sharpened the intellectual point in our educational procedure. It is obvious that we cannot compete with the library facilities of big urban universities. We must depend upon the teacher. There is a Chinese proverb that places the stress correctly. "A load of books does not equal one good teacher." Agreed! And this is not to derogate the book but to raise the good teacher to the position he or she justly deserves in the scheme of things. We have aimed to attract as students, teachers from all the teaching levels who appreciate fine teaching, and we have tried to encourage them to see that what contributes most forcefully to teaching is an interest in ideas and an ability to handle them. Let me develop this side of Bread Loaf's potential contribution, so important is it.

3.

During the late winter the New York Times in its daily book reviews section carried an advertisement from one of the largest publishing houses in our country. The advertisement was headed: "Why do the English write so well?" There followed a paragraph in which the inquiry was pursued. It stated that it was almost a commonplace to observe that the educated Englishman could always be trusted to write "an articulate English sentence, while his American counterpart (was) less likely to possess this skill." Why was this so? It couldn't be the weather, facetiously surmised the writer, "since parts of our country have awkward weather as well." It might be due, he thought, to the large, rich, "accumulated body of literature" and the way in which the English child was introduced to it. "Is it possible," the

writer inquired, "that when an English child is asked to deal with ideas, his American opposite is being asked to deal with things?" It continued: "We suspect that the ability to handle his own language adequately is the mark of an Englishman's education, and possibly it is one of the centers of his pride." If you agree with this assumption, would you also agree with the explanation of the assumption? And if you do agree with both the assumption and its explanation, do you think there is any relevance between it and American education? Is it not everlastingly worth our while to encourage an interest in literature as a seedbed full of pollinating ideas?

Testing the validity of the ad-writer's main point--that the English are trained to deal with ideas, I think the contention is more right than wrong. I remember in the late 1920's at Oxford University, sitting down one afternoon at tea-time and discussing the ideas and themes in Eugene O'Neill's plays with an English student at great length. We talked a good deal about what O'Neill was saying in his plays. (This was pre-"Strange Interlude".) On another occasion, I remember talking about the idea of Impressionism and Van Gogh; and once again, at a tea, several of us had a lively discussion that ranged from determinism to fascism. But, best of all, I remember an invitation to the Senior Common Room--we would call it a Faculty Room over here, although it really has no accurate equivalent--where the Rector of Exeter College at Oxford University, Dr. Marett, an anthropologist, read a paper before a group of dons and students. Afterward the chaplain, Mr. Williams, led a discussion, examining Dr. Marett's underlying premises and ideas. He disagreed at some points with the Rector's contentions, pleasantly, but firmly, and eloquently, with no apparent irritation on the part of our Rector who was described to me as one of the three greatest anthropologists of the time. It was a disinterested discus-

ment was pliant, congenial, animated. The American students left the Senior Common Room feeling they had been let in on something new in educational experience. We were ready to break a whole armory of lances with George Bernard Shaw's assertion that "the university turns out people with artificial minds." It didn't seem so to us--not while two men of such calibre as Dr. Marett and Mr. Williams could examine ideas like candlers candling ideas not eggs. Nor did it seem so at any later time. We were never disillusioned in this respect. These men, like egg candlers, seemed to know the difference between sound ideas and ones that Socrates called "wind-eggs", or, as we would say, 'phonies'. They held them up to the light of the intelligence where they could be inspected freshly and discussed impersonally without the slightest controversial rancor. Education by ideas could be pleasurable stimulating, it need not be either self-conscious attitudinizing or self-defensive, face-saving. Later, I was to hear Robert Frost say that all truth is dialogue. But at Oxford I got my ephebic initiation in the field of ideas. At least truth was not a monologue--not a one-way lecture and I had pretty much come to think it was in our country.

David Daiches is reported in TIME (April 29, 1957) as recording his impression of the difference between the British and American university student. Mr. Daiches, who has lectured at the University of Indiana and Cornell University as well as at Bread Loaf, says that the British student most appreciates the lecturer who plays with ideas "cleverly and suggestively." The American student, Mr. Daiches concludes from direct experience, wants no nonsense. He illustrates. "'Do you believe in that view of literature you were developing in your lecture this morning?' a Cornell student once asked me. I said that I did not, but I thought it was interesting to play with the idea a little and see where it led us. He replied, almost angrily,

that if I did not believe the theory to be true I should not waste my own and the class's time discussing it at such length; it was sheer verbal gymnastics, and the students were there to learn, not to be played with." I should think that Mr. Daiches was following the method of the Greeks. He was trying to make his classroom "a thinking-shop," and it would seem to me that if one could follow this procedure effectively thoughts would be the end-product. And what more do we want than to take pleasure in thoughts of our own that have the twist of our own thinking and that meet with the considered deliberation of our fellowmen? I could only wish that every classroom in Bread Loaf was "a thinking-shop" and that every student was a thought-candler, letting no 'wind-eggs' escape unidentified.

Mr. Daiches also referred to those students who went on to graduate school, leaving with them a formidable background of information and a methodological ability that exceed their British counterpart. Forthwith they plunge into an analysis of Marvell's imagery before they have become at home in English literature and before they have become "really inward with its traditions and achievements," and, of course, it isn't likely that these students will have any true sense of European culture "as a whole." Very much to the point Mr. Daiches says: "I often have the feeling that the American student, who works hard and learns fast, never has time to enjoy his work." He adds: "I think there is something to be said for spreading things out, for slow and cumulative learning." And I add to Mr. Daiches' point, that I think something is to be said in taking a few years to get one's M.A. degree, letting one session of study and reading sink in before the next one starts, absorbing pleasurably. I know you have all heard this sort of talk before; so have I. And I know that many--I hope most--will agree with me that it would still be gospel in education, whether at the undergraduate or graduate

school level, whether we are teachers or businessmen. How many of us really (1) receive as much pleasure out of reading in the field of literature as he or she should, (2) has a really inward relationship to the traditions and achievements of literature, or (3) has a sense of European culture as a whole?

Perhaps it has been the failure in American education sufficiently to effect these or similar ends that has resulted, in part at least, in the latest form of fidelity--anti-intellectualism by which I mean indifference, if not downright hostility to ideas. Those who taught us literature had early capitulated to what Dos Passos called history in U.S.A.--"the billiondollar speed up"--and insisted that we cover areas of knowledge with a wholly unbecoming dispatch. We were devourers of factual foreground materials, and coverers of causes ad nauseum. We never had time to stop, once we were committed to the system. We toiled and we spun. Whirl was king, Zeus (in this context, common sense) having abdicated. Our earnestness and energy had got the better of our instinctual good sense. Hawthorne's rejoinder about the American's addiction to progress was true also of our haste to become educated. "We go all wrong," said Hawthorne, "by too strenuous a resolution to go all right." The spectre that haunts us is not ignorance--ignorance is our perennial adversary. The spectre that haunts us is a culture of things, the result of the mass producers, the appliers of Frederick Winslow Taylor's system, the proliferation of articles, instruments, and utilities, the eternal conveyor belts, the illimitable assembly lines. And the token of our appetite for a culture of things in our society is an inordinate interest in facts with its resulting emphasis on information, newspapers, almanacs, encyclopedias, quiz programs, Congressional records, and minutes of the last meeting. Think how cluttered and encumbered our life is with statistics, records, data. For a change we might try

to keep the important things inscribed on our thumbnails, as Thoreau once suggested. We could stop a moment and entertain an idea, harvest a thought. The English School exists for the maturation of thoughts; not certainly for the culture of things, but rather for the culture of ideas. This also is a way of taking Bread Loaf.

And one final point I am sure you have often thought to yourself: when does all this sort of thing end--all this unseemly hurry to get educated and this business of card-indexing knowledge? No wonder in our age of anxiety we have now moved into the phase of tranquilizers. I doubt whether many people are being dosed with Equanil or Sedamyl because they are intellectually over-stimulated. I should think teachers might require tranquilizers simply to reduce the blood pressure at trying to stem the intrusion of a form of anti-intellectualism in the heart of the school system. It is notably portrayed in the 395-page teachers' manual, published by the Chicago public-school system and entitled Source Material of the Education Program: A Guide Book of Living and Learning Experience. Consider just one phase, closely related to our interest here at Bread Loaf--"Language Arts." High School students are encouraged to spend time "reading messages on movie and television screens to check their accuracy and relevancy"--presumably to check on the incidence of throat cancer and the cigaret that is king. There are, among several thousand other things in this manual, forty-four kinds of listening taught and the students also work hard at using "sign language," which includes "the sign language of animals." This is all a form of anti-intellectualism, it seems to me, because preoccupation with extraneous matters is a dodge to avoid what Emerson once called "the vexation of thinking." This manual is a form of adjustment to one's fellowman. But so many people today are so well-adjusted to their fellowman that they have nothing left but

a superficial shell of social decorousness. They are adjusted to everything but themselves. In this year of our Lord one of the greatest privileges--might I add--natural tranquilizers--is privacy. So many students are instructed in how to get along with one another that they have truly become "a lonely crowd." It is against all that this Manual represents, this form of intellectual subversion and forced adjustment, that Bread Loaf School of English stands. If education at any and all levels means anything, it means something personally pleasurable. But pleasurable, as all thinking can be pleasurable, when we move deliberately toward a center of light. I think that up here on the mountain there is no absence of light--that there is not even a fire-lit darkness, such as Virgil chides Dante about in the Inferno. "It is vulgar to linger in the fire-lit darkness," the passage reads, "for the end of our journey is the center of light." Here we do have a center of light which irradiates time, place, and people--this summer, this exhilarating mountain bowl, and these teachers and friends.

Seniors

1957 (19)

Balle, Mary

Blodgett, Alice Peterson

Chamberlain, Dorothy Elizabeth

Cosner, Mary Catherine

Curran, Kathryn Agnes

Fuller, Melicent Rawson

Gimbel, Richard Webster

Golmon, Ara Arnold

Hughes, Mary Shirley

Karlson, Robert Emil

Love, Jean Fiske

O'Connell, Ann Catherine

Post, Michael St. Anthony, President

Quirino, Leonard Salvator

Rottler, Emil Kurt

Scholz, Meta Marie

~~Sweet, Robert/Burdette~~ (failed)

Turner, Mildred Evelyn

Vassallo, Carol Elizabeth

Weis, Virginia Mary

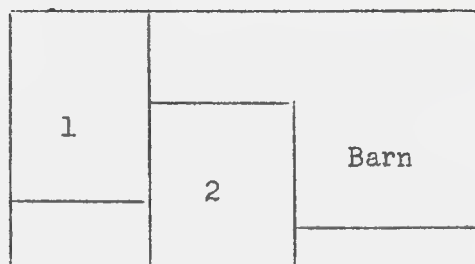
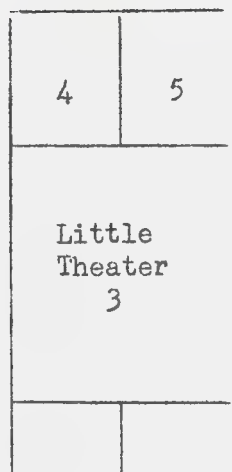
BREAD LOAF SCHOOL OF ENGLISH
1957
General Statistics

<u>Student attendance by state:</u> (according to school address)		Total student attendance	123
Colorado	1	Men students	42
Connecticut	11	Women students	81
Georgia	1	Old students	65
Illinois	8	New students	58
Indiana	4	Graduated post-1950	56
Iowa	1	Graduated pre-1950	61
Louisiana	1	Undergraduates	6
Maine	2	Off-campus students	10
Maryland	3	Candidates for a Midd. M.A.	69
Massachusetts	13	Scholarship students	7
Michigan	1	Seniors	20
Minnesota	1	Prospective 1958 seniors	13
Mississippi	1	Veterans	8
Nebraska	1	Auditors	16
New Hampshire	5	Working for 8 credits	9
New Jersey	5	Working for 7 credits	4
New York	19	Working for 6 credits	66
North Dakota	1	Working for 5 credits	7
Ohio	7	Working for 4 credits	14
Oklahoma	2	Working for 3 credits	2
Pennsylvania	15	Working for 2 credits	5
North Carolina	2		
South Carolina	1		
Texas	1		
Vermont	5		
Virginia	2		
Washington	2		
Wisconsin	2		
Alaska	1		
Canada	4		
(28 states represented)			

Attendance by courses:

Modern Literary Criticism	21
Stagecraft	12
Writing and Analysis of Short Story	11
Chaucer	25
American Authors of the 19th C.	23
Milton	21
Metaphor, Symbol, and Myth	30
19th C. Literature and Society	18
English Poetry: 1880-1950	32
20th C. American Novels	19
Hardy and Conrad	22
Six Epochal Heroes	26
Classical Drama	11
Ancient Epic and Romance	27

SCHEDULE OF CLASSES
1957



8:30 A.M.

1 Modern Literary Criticism	Mr. Sypher	Little Theater 3
19 Chaucer	Mr. Anderson	Barn 1
26 Amer. Authors of the 19th C.	Mr. Brown	Barn 2

9:30 A.M.

53 Metaphor, Symbol, and Myth	Mr. Davis	Little Theater 3
32 Milton	Mr. Kelley	Barn 2
99 Hardy and Conrad	Mr. Davidson	Barn 1
103 Classical Drama	Mr. Hadas	Little Theater 5

10:30 A.M.

7b Stagecraft	Mr. Volkert	Little Theater 3
57 19th C. Literature and Society	Mr. Sypher	Barn 2
74 English Poetry: 1880-1950	Mr. Anderson	Barn 1
95 Major 20th C. American Novels	Mr. Brown	Little Theater 5

11:30 A.M.

17 Writing & Crit. Anal. of Sh. St.	Mr. Davis	Barn 2
102 Six Epochal Heroes	Mr. Kelley	Barn 1
104 Ancient Epic and Romance	Mr. Hadas	Little Theater 3

The Bread Loaf School of English

ENTERTAINMENT PROGRAM

1957

July 3	Robert Frost	A reading and talk Little Theater - 8:15 P.M.
July 8	Carlos Baker	Modern Fiction Little Theater - 8:15 P.M.
July 15	Richard Wilbur	Little Theater - 8:15 P.M.
July 19 & ²² 20	Short plays	Robert Frost's "Masque of Reason," "Masque of Mercy," and "The Witch of Coös" Little Theater - 8:30 P.M.
July 24	Sherry Underwood	Interpretation of poems through the dance Little Theater - 8:30 P.M.
July 29	Elizabeth Drew	Little Theater - 8:15 P.M. <i>Analysis of Three Poems</i>
August 2	Three-act play	"The Playboy of the Western World" Little Theater - 8:30 P.M.
August 10	Commencement	Little Theater - 8:00 P.M.

Bread Loaf School of English

COMMENCEMENT ADDRESS

August 10, 1957

George Anderson

SOME ROCKS IN THE GROVES OF ACADEMIE

A good many years ago--thirty, to be exact--I attended a meeting at a university which will remain nameless and met for the first time a teacher and scholar who will also remain nameless, save for the usual arresting anonymity of "Professor X." And at this meeting Professor X remarked in a suitably pontifical manner, "When I am called before the Great White Throne, there will be three charges to which I hope I shall never have to plead guilty: (1) I wrote a textbook; (2) I taught in summer school; and (3) I delivered a commencement address."

I have always remembered that speech and sweetly marveled at it, although not as any precept for my own professional conduct. As a matter of fact, I will hereby publicly plead guilty to Professor X's charges, on all three counts. I cannot say, however, that I am oppressed by any sense of guilt. Writing a textbook has a legitimate place in any teacher's career, if only because he can in this way extend his teaching influence beyond the confines of the particular institution with which he is connected; there is the opportunity, moreover, to make a little extra money--to augment one's income, to use the more velvet phrase--although this vulgar possibility is not one on which you can depend. I still remember, though, how a magnificent Chaucerian scholar once confided to me that writing a textbook kept him in automobiles. Yet I should wish for a teacher to write other things besides. As for the third point, to deliver a commencement address is a privilege and an honor at any time. And if I, as a matter of principle, had never taught in a summer school, I should never have had the special privilege of teaching at Bread Loaf, which will always be one of the rarest memories of my life.

I find it a great temptation to grow reminiscent about earlier graduation nights here at Bread Loaf, beginning with the one 26 years ago, the first gradua-

tion here in the Little Theater, which grew phoenix-like throughout the session of 1931 after the fire that June had destroyed part of the Inn and the meeting-place for occasions like the present one. I remember Robert Frost and others speaking to us in the dining-room, and the classes held in the Blue Parlor, in the living rooms of Frothingham, Treman, and Fritz Cottages, or wherever a few could be gathered together. And the speaker at Commencement that year was Miss Hortense Moore, our then Director of Dramatics, who spoke for half an hour in impeccable heroic couplets. I think that my fellow-survivors from that golden year, Donald Davidson and Theodore Morrison, will agree with me that those were remarkable days.

Nostalgia at this moment, however, is a luxury not to be afforded. I have somewhat more serious things to consider. And so I return to Professor X, about whom my feelings are not in the least nostalgic. As I have from time to time thought over his attitude toward his profession, as he expressed it not only in that speech of 1927 but in his subsequent utterances, I remain impressed by his monumental snobbishness and arrogance; and I have been around long enough to have observed that while there are many great men and women in the teaching profession, there is also an extraordinary number of snobs, although I grant that if you look long enough at the other professions you will find that the same observation holds good for them as well. There are, in short, too many Professor X's in the world.

Now of course we are all likely to become snobs in one sense or another. This discouraging fact seems to be as inevitable as hardening of the arteries or presbyopia. It would therefore be ridiculous for me to attempt tonight any complete catalogue of the fascinating possibilities of snobbery, even if I could. I shall have more than enough to do if I call to your attention some of the types of snobs which you as teachers are most likely to meet or to become, in the hope, nevertheless, that none of you who is to receive his or her degree tonight will feel obliged to develop into one.

Yeats once remarked that an intellectual hatred was the worst. Perhaps the intellectual snob is the worst, although I myself should be inclined to award this inverse eminence to the religious snob, who seems to me the most indefensible of all. But there is an imposing hierarchy of snobbery, from the deadly to the harmless, if any can indeed be called harmless. I shall leave to you the task of ranking these types in the order of their objectionable qualities. There is, for instance, the "not of this place and time but of all other places and times" snob, or as Ko-ko, the Lord High Executioner in The Mikado describes him:

... The idiot who praises, with enthusiastic tone
All centuries but this, and every country but his own.

And there is his converse, the individual who can see good only in his or her own place and time, nay even, in his or her immediate age-group, to whom anything written, composed, or painted before 1925, at the earliest, should be left unwept, unhonored, and unsung, and who is completely satisfied to look at everything in a vacuum, on the grounds that we do things better now and know more than those old-timers. Then there is the regional snob, who insists that the only worthwhile writing comes or can come from south of the Mason and Dixon line, or north of the Ohio River, or west of Rock Island, or east of--Eden. Still narrower in his vision is the metropolitan or Manhattan snob (the opposite number to the Martini snob), who is one of the most parochial and bigoted of them all: he believes that culture can come only from a New York, a London, or a Paris--more especially from some particular district thereof. And there is his country-cousin parallel, who prefers to go miles out of his way in order to avoid breathing the tainted air of such unholy wastelands of filth and corruption as a New York, a London, or a Paris. There is the patriotic or xenophobic snob--the American who prefers his home product to anything in England or on the Continent, and charitably pities the foreigners' merchandise; or the Englishman who is constrained to place anything indigenous to America in the category of the impossible and who never takes the trouble to inform himself about it. He has a close friend in the American who can travel only in Europe and

who knows nothing of his own country west of the Hudson River or east of the High Sierras (save perhaps New York, the port of embarkation and debarkation--and you have heard the saying that New York is not America). One of the truly pestilential types of snob is the name-dropping snob, who knows all the important people, or at least hopes you will think he does, and has eaten in all the *recherché* restaurants. He does well until he is finally confronted by an important personage, who somehow fails to place him. But I need not continue this roll-call, save to mention the general, all-purpose snob, who can enjoy nothing that has not first been enjoyed by one more famous or more wealthy or more frequently cleansed by that curious detergent known as prestige. Nor should I omit one of the most subtle of all, the inverted snob, who is a snob because he is sure that he is not a snob. I call him the "God, I thank thee that I am not as other men" snob.

I might quote the Lord High Executioner again and remind you that

It really doesn't matter whom you put upon the list,
For they'll none of 'em be missed; they'll none of 'em be missed.

Snobbery is never a negligible matter. Not only does the snob expose himself to immediate attack by any discerning person, but his snobbery stands seriously in the way of an objective approach to his material, which every sound teacher and scholar must have as a basis for his work. Not that I would maintain that a teacher, especially of the humanities, should be devoid of subjective thought and preferences. But is it not possible for us to admire certain things for ourselves, without having to depend solely upon what others, with their little coteries, consider fit to admire? Do we need to sneer at others who admire certain other things? No, I must conclude that snobbery is in itself dangerous to the integrity of the teacher and the scholar; and when it becomes combined with a much uglier trait of human nature, arrogance, then it borders upon intellectual pathology.

As a would-be medievalist, I must place arrogance under the banner of Pride, which always heads the procession of the Seven Deadly Sins. I suppose that what has irritated me most about Professor X's strictures was the direct implication

that he was superior to those who, for whatever reason, wrote textbooks and taught in summer school and addressed graduate classes--that, in other words, he condemned such activity as plebeian. Some may think he was right, but I must beg to differ. Let me take a minute or two to trace the subsequent career of Professor X. The fact is that Fate did things to him, as she does to all of us. As a matter of fact, he did write a textbook, or part of one, and I regret to say that it was a poor job. He did teach in summer school, although in a rather rarefied linguistic institute. I must admit that I can find no record of his having made a commencement speech; apparently he did not go down for the third time. He was within narrow limits a good scholar; although given to certain pet obsessions of learning which were either notably eccentric or dead wrong. When he ventured to throw his weight around in the block adjoining the little academic street in which he lived, he fell flat on his face. He was condescending to his subordinates in the department of which he was a member and brutal to those of his graduate students who saw fit to differ with him; and towards young men venturing into his particular field of scholarship he was as ferocious as a male animal destroying his young. But I must concede that he had some admirers, and eventually he received his reward in the form of an honorary degree from an institution of undoubted snob-value. A successful career, you may say, as careers go. Yet he never earned the fundamental respect of his colleagues and students, and now that he has retired, they tend to treat him as a joke, a rather sour joke that has to be tolerated for the sake of decency.

I should not have spent so much time growling my gloomy dissatisfaction with Professor X, if I were not so concerned about the disservice which he and others like him have done to our profession. It is useless to speak of the causes of his arrogance and egoism save where they might relate to a possible cure. Was it some sort of basic insecurity, the bugbear of us all? Was it simply that he was originally a spoiled brat and never had any one to bring him up sharp against realities? Was it that he had been educated in the tradition of the gentleman scholar, who in

his Olympian position toiled little and spun less, while his underlings did all the hard, dirty, mechanical work for him. Perhaps it is enough to observe that somebody or something put him on the wrong train and that he was temperamentally unable to get off.

How could he have improved his effectiveness and usefulness as a member of our profession? Realizing that one cannot draw blood from rock, I should answer, by the simple expedient of injecting, however painfully, a little sympathy and humility into his system--especially humility, for with that, sympathy will usually develop spontaneously. I do not mean that he, or others like him, or any of us, should turn into squirming Uriah Heeps. But I certainly believe that we as a group have an obligation to recognize the limitations of our knowledge of even our specialty, since we all tend to have a specialty nowadays. It is a very salutary thing for all of us teachers to have to say from time to time, "I don't know." It is amazing how many are unable to choke out those three monosyllables. Only you must be careful to just whom you confess your ignorance. I recall how once, when I was still a junior instructor, a belligerent freshman put his head in the door of my office and barked out, "Who wrote Beowulf?" I said that I didn't know; I forgot to say that no one knows. "I thought so!" he jeered. "I'll go see the Dean. He knows everything." Fortunately the Dean was a former professor of English and so didn't know the answer either; otherwise I might have been dubbed an ignoramus at the outset of my career.

It is something of a truism that nobody knows all the answers better than the young man or woman of under 30, but if this young teacher is wise, he will try to get his dose of humility as early as possible. Then he will not be compelled to slash up a student's theme or examination paper with needless sarcasm, which is just about the poorest pedagogic tool in the whole machine-shop. Nothing will prejudice an older teacher or an administrator against a young teacher more quickly than to hear that the young man or woman regards the student as intellectually

beneath contempt. No teacher, young or old, has a right to such an attitude.

Very well, once we have swallowed this dose of humility, to which it would be well, if possible, to add the bracing tonic of a sense of humor, we should do all that we can to enlarge the boundaries of our knowledge and to continue always to educate ourselves for the term of our life. We should do this for the sake of the vitality of our teaching if for no other reason. And this does not mean that we need to take more courses all the time or collect degrees as one collects rare postage stamps. I merely said, "enlarge the boundaries of our knowledge"--general and specific: travel about where and when we can, observe how other people do things in our profession, keep abreast of new developments, never decay into dry rot--in short, keep alive. If this may seem unnecessarily obvious counsel for the young teacher, let me remind you that it should apply as well to old teachers. As Eliot puts it, "Old men ought to be explorers." We should all answer the questions put by Satan in Paradise Lost by convincing ourselves and others that it is most emphatically not sin to know, nor death, and that we do not stand by ignorance. Always, however, we should remember that we do not know it all and never will; our way of thinking and doing things may not be the only way, perhaps not even the right way. And so, if another way seems better, we should examine it and try it out, not turn our heads away in contempt because some one whom we have followed for his snob-value happens to be doing things the inefficient way. No one ever got anywhere by staying within his own little cell. When Thoreau said that he had traveled much--in Concord--he was only half-right. A parochial experience is far too limited.

The American teacher today is said to be crossing the threshold of manifold opportunities. I have seen the most remarkable estimates of the great number of students who will enroll in secondary schools and colleges during the 1960's--a decade which is now only four years away. It seems clear already that the demand for qualified teachers will be great, and the shortage extreme. This may

well be true, especially if one holds on to the word qualified. To judge by the glut of letters of applications which I receive annually--and my colleagues in other institutions report the same profusion--I should say that there is as yet no shortage, at least of teachers of English in the gross. That may come later. But it is still true and will, I believe, always be true, that the well trained and well qualified teachers will remain relatively scarce. In spite of the prophesied multitude of students, I do not think that the master's degree will become superfluous, as some have suggested. Nor will the colleges dispense with the requirement of the Ph.D. for most members of their teaching staffs.

As to the training of teachers for degrees above the baccalaureate, I should like to say in passing that teaching techniques are good things to know, but craftsmanship alone never produced a masterpiece, and there is still no substitute for knowledge and experience--not just the knowledge that comes to one after four years in high school or four years in college or an indeterminate number of years in graduate school, but that which is acquired over a lifetime. An experienced teacher with humility, tolerance, humor, and understanding to back up a thorough command and control of his subject can defy a syllabus and hand-to-mouth daily assignments. Moreover, with such equipment it matters little what college he or she came from or whether or not it was on the accredited list of such and such an association or certifying board. But this blessed state of these happy few cannot be reached at once; it takes a true professional, an "old pro", to attain it.

I should like each of you who receives his or her degree tonight to aim at becoming an "old pro." You cannot expect, however, to become true professionals at the outset, any more than you could expect to become a famous surgeon as soon as you have completed your internship, or a top-notch jurist as soon as you have passed your Bar Examinations. I am therefore always a little surprised, although I should be getting used to it by now, at the attitude of some of the younger

members of our profession. I do not quarrel with their desire to begin with a high salary. They would be foolish if they did not try to get what they could. But they expect to get to the top too soon. They do not understand that the salary scale in any school system or any college has not only a minimum but also a maximum, and the difference between this minimum and maximum is in no way comparable to the corresponding difference in other fields of endeavor, save perhaps in the ministry. Most of these young teachers expect sizable raises each year. If this noteworthy benefit could be managed indefinitely--and no institution in the country can do that at present--it would mean that the instructor who begins his first teaching assignment at, let us say, the age of twenty-five, will easily have transcended the salary scales of most institutions by the time he is forty. What then? Where do you go from the top? You will have some twenty-five more years in which to practice your profession; will that maximum salary suffice you for those twenty-five more years? If so, won't you be likely to coast down hill, lacking a monetary incentive at precisely the time when you should be at the height of your powers and most active?

No doubt the fiscal policies of our schools and colleges will have been revised within the next dozen years or so, but it does not seem likely that the teaching profession will in the foreseeable future be among the most lucrative of professions. I cannot propose here a solution to this disturbing problem; that is for the unfortunate administrators to decide. (Incidentally, teachers should be more understanding toward administrators than they seem to be; the administrator is subject to pressures which the teacher seldom can imagine. As far as that goes, I should like to see both teachers and administrators adopt the policy of the sheriff in a lawless community of the Old West, who had the following sign placed in a conspicuous position in the saloon: "Don't shoot the piano player, he's doing the best he can.") But, all facetiousness aside, I am truly worried about this attitude of the young teacher who expects speedy recognition.

Is it due to mere ambition? Or to the arrogance which arises from the inexperience of youth? I do not wish to sound either captious or stuffy, but in my years at graduate school we realized, or were made to realize, that we had chosen a profession whose roots, for centuries past, have lain deep in the tradition that its neophytes should have little more at first than bare subsistence, and not too much ever, and that this profession was in its very nature a profession of service and dedication, one of the most exacting, in terms of effort and wear and tear, of all professions. It is still remarkable to me how, particularly in this country, the job of teaching is still considered by the layman a bed-of-roses job, one to be measured only by the hours spent in the classroom. Look at all the vacation we get, and look how we teach the same old stuff all the time.

And now? The young instructor, more often than not, comes to us already possessed of the standard equipment of a wife and more than one child--often with another on the way--mouths to be fed, and we must of course help to feed them. He may very likely insist on buying a house, if only on a shoestring, as if he were planning to stay with us indefinitely--I have even known cases where the purchase of a house was used as an argument that the instructor should be reappointed. He takes altogether too many things for granted. He draws a long face, if he does not refuse outright, when asked to take a class which meets on Saturdays; he resents being called upon to help proctor an examination or to serve as judge in a debate, or to do any of the many chores which belong to his period of apprenticeship. Every profession has its apprenticeship--why should teachers expect it to be different in their case? In brief, he seems to think that he can be a master teacher at the very beginning of his career. Such an attitude no worthy profession to say nothing of the ancient and honorable one of teaching, can tolerate for any length of time.

Even worse is the case of the young instructor who tells his chairman how to run the Department, usually with the greatest of good cheer. "Now if I were you

I wouldn't do that." My friends at other institutions have told me of similar instances, fortunately rare. I can only wonder now how it would have gone with me if, in my salad days as a beginner, I had ventured to talk in this way to my chairman. Of course I am aware of the sad fact that to any young man or woman in any generation, any one over forty is suspect, partly because of the natural antagonism of successive generations and partly because one who is forty-five or more will not play the same game in the same way as one who is only twenty-five. This is all human nature, but if we left everything to human nature, we should have chaos.

The remedy for all this irritating callowness is still the same--a combination of humility, a perpetual willingness to learn and know, and a tolerant common sense. The rest will ultimately follow, but patience will be required. Indeed, I could at this point trot out all the platitudes in Poor Richard's Almanack, and the joke is that most of them would fit the situation of the beginning teacher. In spite of all the groaning I have indulged in for the past twenty minutes, I want to dispel any impression that I consider our coming crop of teachers a group of patronizing, shallow men and women who have gone into teaching because it is in their opinion a comfortable and secure kind of racket. There are some such, I regret to say, but they will soon be disabused. No, on the contrary, I am constantly being impressed by the calibre of most of the sincere young teachers who are available today and will doubtless be available in the future. But if they go on to success in their profession, it will be, I think, because they have developed the virtues which I have just named. The proof of the pudding will remain the teacher himself, not the college he attended, nor even the courses he took in his training. I have seen graduates of obscure, struggling colleges do magnificent work as students, teachers, and scholars; I have also seen graduates of some of our richest and best known institutions make a complete botch of everything pertaining to the profession. For nothing can take the place of a mixture of knowl-

edge and solid worth. Unless he has the proper qualifications, such as those I have mentioned tonight, no teacher can expect other things--an eccentric or allegedly colorful personality, a gift for clowning, an award of "most popular professor" (one of the easiest and most meretricious awards to be won), a glib manner, an imposing façade, the friends he has in high places--to pull him through. A monkey dressed in silks is still a monkey.

With knowledge and skill, the rest is chiefly a matter of integrity and sane balance, and a clear devotion to the profession which honors you and which I hope you will honor. I am reminded here, as I close, of something written in England eight hundred or nine hundred years ago. The original, in fact, was written in Latin more than nine hundred years ago by Aelfric, abbot of Eynsham, preacher, teacher, and scholar--the most important English writer between Alfred the Great and the Norman Conquest. There is an English version of this so-called Colloquy on the Occupations, tucked in between the lines of the Latin in only one of the extant manuscripts of the work; it was probably added by some well-intentioned scribe many years--perhaps more than a century--later. In this conversation piece, a teacher is questioning various people--a plowman, a shepherd, an oxherd, a hunter, a fisherman, a fowler, a baker, and a few others--about their individual trades. A dispute breaks out, precipitated by the teacher, as to which of these trades is the most important. Evidently this teacher would have made a good section leader in a General Education course. The teacher then astutely refers the problem to a counselor--a principal? a dean? a department chairman? Judging by the delicate nature of the question, I am convinced that it must have been a department chairman. And the counselor, after due consideration, delivers himself thus:

My friends and good workers, let us end this dispute at once, and let there be peace and agreement among us, and let each help the other in his trade and always agree with the plowman, from whom we have food for ourselves and fodder for our horses. And I

give this advice to all workers, that each shall practice his profession diligently, for he who neglects his profession will be neglected by his profession. Whatsoever you may be, priest or monk, peasant or warrior, practice and exercise yourself in that, and be what you are, for it is a great reproach and shame for a man not to be willing to be what he is and what he ought to be.

In a few minutes now our session will be over, and the little nucleus that was Bread Loaf, 1957, will explode towards all parts of the country. Some of us will return, and some of us will not. I can only hope that those words of the good abbot of Eynsham will keep ringing in your ears, as they have rung in mine for a third of a century:

And I give this advice to all workers, that each shall practice his profession diligently, for he who neglects his profession will be neglected by his profession.

Thank you and God speed.